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Expected To Clean Up CIA 'Mess'

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Raborn a 'Fog-Cutter'

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FROM POST NEWS SERVICES

WASHINGTON -- It can be said without fear of White House contradiction that Texas-born Vice Admiral William F. Raborn was picked by President Johnson to head the vital Central Intelligence Agency, not because of his military background but because of his outstanding administrative ability.

The chances are also that Mr Johnson is depending on his new CIA chief to use his persuasive technique as an administrator (pretty much similar to LBJ's "let us reason together" soft sell) to straighten out what has become an almost scandalous mess in this country's intelligence gathering activities.

EACH BRANCH of the armed services has its own intelligence operation as does the State Department and, believe it or not, the U. S. Information Service (at least in South Viet Nam).

The man Raborn succeeds as CIA director, John A. McCone, himself replaced Allen Dulles in November, 1961, in what was considered a postscript to the abortive Cuban invasion. McCone, a former West Coast industrialist who became head of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1958, is retiring from government service apparently at his own choosing.

Raborn brings to the post a background shaped by the United States Navy but polished by his own driving energy.

He was born in Decatur, Texas, on June 8, 1905. He is married and has two children.

As a youngster growing up in a succession of landlocked small Texas and Oklahoma

towns, he knew he wanted a career at sea and strived to wrangle an appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy. At Annapolis he knew he wanted a career in Naval aviation, then in the early 1920s still only a toy which no self-respecting battleship admiral would take seriously.

RABORN WAS forced to wait 10 years after graduation, until 1934, before earning his wings. Then his career veered off toward the carrier fleet.

Aboard the carrier Hancock in World War II he won the Silver Star medal for gallantry when a Japanese suicide bomber struck the ship.

He supervised fire fighting and damage-control units in the midst of blinding smoke and large fires.

Raborn, who was eventually to retire from the Navy as a three-star admiral, held the rank of commander at the war's end.

In the Navy, Raborn developed the Polaris missile. He now leaves the vice presidency of Aerojet General Corp of Pasadena, Calif, a job he has held since his 1963 retirement as deputy chief of Naval Operations for Research.

HE HAD WON that spot after leading the team which created the fleet ballistic missile system, including the Polaris and its submerged launching device, the Pop Up.

His role is recounted in the book "Polaris," written by William E. Howard and James Baar.

According to "Polaris," the admiral had an uncanny ability to make the right decision --after his high-level technicians agonized uncertainly between this design or that



ADM WILLIAM F. RABORN IS A TEXAN
LBJ's CIA Chief Famed As an Administrator

—AP Wirephoto

If there is any question as to the importance to national security of having U. S. intelligence operations function properly there is a ready answer in the present sad state of affairs in Viet Nam.

THE NEW Military editor, Jerry Greene, recently returned from the Southeast

Asia was asked "This speaks," as he calls his intelligence

operatives, "are falling all over themselves out there and they still don't know what the Viet Cong is doing or are up to."

Greene substantiates entirely a description of U. S. intelligence operations in Viet Nam by Malcolm W. Browne

who began covering the war for the Associated Press in 1961.

In his book "The New Face of War," Browne has this to say:

"CLOSELY ALLIED to the CIA was the Military Combined Studies Group which administered the whole Special Forces program. The U.S. Aid Mission set up an intelligence group, working with its civilian police advisors.

"The U. S. Information Service set up an intelligence group. The U. S. Army set up the 704th Military Intelligence Detachment, which dabbles in all kinds of things. The provost marshal's office had an intelligence outfit. The Army created another intelligence unit for 'strategic intelligence' unit at every one of the scores of American advisory detachments throughout South Viet Nam. Even the U. S. Navy brought in a little intelligence unit. And the U. S. Embassy's security section was involved all along in political intelligence."

This is of course a case of federal bureaucracy functioning at its very worst and in the delicate involved intelligence aspect of national security with hits "peace or war" connotations.

AS BROWNE SAYS in his book, none of these spy groups "is willing to co-operate with the others on a regular basis. Each maintains fierce unit esprit and takes enormous pride in its intelligence scoops."

Admiral Raborn can clean up this intelligence mess if anybody can.

Said a retired admiral:

"The President got quite a guy. Red's the kind of guy who won't be distracted by nonessential detail. He's a guy who drives himself and who's one of those lucky fellows who commands respect and makes you want to do your best.

"Red's got tremendous managerial ability.

"He can really cut through the fog."

Raborn's "right" decision were vital in the mid-1950s when the whole system was just beginning to jell for a fueled missile.

As an administrator, subordinates remember a blunt-spoken man impatient with written reports who preferred to cross-examine them on their work. He suffers no fools.

HE'LL HAVE to be a top administrator to handle his new job.

It has to be granted that retiring CIA chief McCone tried, in his three and a half years in office, to end the petty jealousies, rivalries and contradictory "evaluations" which spring from the many spy-boy units over which the CIA had no control.

McCone has a modicum of success, but his first job was to straighten out the CIA itself which had become under "Master Spy" Dulles' regime of eight years an administrative monstrosity. Dulles was a brilliant intelligence operator, but was considered poor administrator.